

[Roll No. 440]

## AYES—35

Brown, Corrine  
Capuano  
Clay  
Conyers  
Davis (TN)  
DeFazio  
DeGette  
Delahunt  
Doggett  
Filner  
Ford  
Gordon

Grijalva  
Hastings (FL)  
Johnson, E. B.  
Lampson  
Lewis (GA)  
Markey  
Matsui  
McGovern  
Miller, George  
Pallone  
Pelosi  
Rangel

Sandlin  
Schakowsky  
Shimkus  
Solis  
Strickland  
Thompson (CA)  
Thompson (MS)  
Towns  
Velazquez  
Waters  
Woolsey

## NOES—393

Abercrombie  
Ackerman  
Aderholt  
Akin  
Alexander  
Allen  
Andrews  
Baca  
Bachus  
Baird  
Baker  
Baldwin  
Ballance  
Ballenger  
Barrett (SC)  
Bartlett (MD)  
Barton (TX)  
Bass  
Beauprez  
Becerra  
Bell  
Bereuter  
Berkley  
Berman  
Berry  
Biggett  
Bilirakis  
Bishop (GA)  
Bishop (NY)  
Blackburn  
Blumenauer  
Blunt  
Boehlert  
Boehner  
Bonilla  
Bonner  
Bono  
Boozman  
Boswell  
Boucher  
Boyd  
Bradley (NH)  
Brady (PA)  
Brady (TX)  
Frelinghuysen  
Brown (OH)  
Brown (SC)  
Brown-Waite,  
Ginny  
Burgess  
Burns  
Burr  
Burton (IN)  
Buyer  
Calvert  
Camp  
Cannon  
Cantor  
Capito  
Capps  
Cardin  
Cardoza  
Carson (IN)  
Carson (OK)  
Carter  
Case  
Castle  
Chabot  
Chocoma  
Clyburn  
Coble  
Cole  
Collins  
Cooper  
Costello  
Cox  
Cramer  
Crane  
Crenshaw  
Crowley  
Cubin  
Culberson  
Cummings

Cunningham  
Davis (AL)  
Davis (CA)  
Davis (FL)  
Davis (IL)  
Davis, Jo Ann  
Davis, Tom  
Deal (GA)  
DeLauro  
DeLay  
DeMint  
Deutsch  
Diaz-Balart, L.  
Diaz-Balart, M.  
Dicks  
Dingell  
Dooley (CA)  
Doolittle  
Doyle  
Dreier  
Duncan  
Dunn  
Edwards  
Ehlers  
Emanuel  
Emerson  
Engel  
English  
Eshoo  
Etheridge  
Evans  
Everett  
Farr  
Fattah  
Feeney  
Ferguson  
Flake  
Fletcher  
Foley  
Forbes  
Fossella  
Frank (MA)  
Franks (AZ)  
Frelinghuysen  
Frost  
Gallegly  
Garrett (NJ)  
Gerlach  
Gibbons  
Gilchrest  
Gillmor  
Gingrey  
Gonzalez  
Goode  
Goodlatte  
Goss  
Granger  
Graves  
Green (TX)  
Green (WI)  
Greenwood  
Gutierrez  
Gutknecht  
Hall  
Harman  
Harris  
Hart  
Hastings (WA)  
Hayes  
Hayworth  
Hefley  
Hensarling  
Herger  
Hill  
Hinche  
Hinojosa  
Hobson  
Hoeffel  
Hoekstra  
Holden  
Holt  
Honda

Hooley (OR)  
Hostettler  
Houghton  
Hoyer  
Hulshof  
Hunter  
Hyde  
Inslie  
Isakson  
Israel  
Issa  
Istook  
Jackson (IL)  
Jackson-Lee  
(TX)  
Janklow  
Jefferson  
Jenkins  
John  
Johnson (CT)  
Johnson (IL)  
Johnson, Sam  
Jones (NC)  
Jones (OH)  
Kanjorski  
Kaptur  
Keller  
Kelly  
Kennedy (MN)  
Kennedy (RI)  
Kildee  
Kilpatrick  
Kind  
King (IA)  
King (NY)  
Kingston  
Kirk  
Klecza  
Kline  
Knollenberg  
Kolbe  
Kucinich  
LaHood  
Langevin  
Lantos  
Larsen (WA)  
Larson (CT)  
Latham  
LaTourette  
Leach  
Lee  
Levin  
Lewis (CA)  
Lewis (KY)  
Linder  
Lipinski  
LoBiondo  
Lofgren  
Lowe  
Lucas (KY)  
Lucas (OK)  
Lynch  
Majette  
Maloney  
Manzullo  
Marshall  
Matheson  
McCarthy (MO)  
McCarthy (NY)  
McCollum  
McCotter  
McCrery  
McDermott  
McHugh  
McInnis  
McIntyre  
McKeon  
McNulty  
Meehan  
Meek (FL)  
Meeks (NY)  
Menendez

Mica  
Michaud  
Millender-  
McDonald  
Miller (FL)  
Miller (MI)  
Miller (NC)  
Miller, Gary  
Mollohan  
Moore  
Moran (KS)  
Murphy  
Murtha  
Musgrave  
Myrick  
Nadler  
Napolitano  
Neal (MA)  
Nethercutt  
Neugebauer  
Ney  
Northup  
Norwood  
Nunes  
Nussle  
Oberstar  
Obey  
Oliver  
Ortiz  
Osborne  
Ose  
Otter  
Owens  
Oxley  
Pascrell  
Paul  
Payne  
Pearce  
Pence  
Peterson (MN)  
Peterson (PA)  
Petri  
Pickering  
Pitts  
Platts  
Pombo  
Pomeroy  
Porter  
Portman  
Price (NC)  
Pryce (OH)

Putnam  
Quinn  
Radanovich  
Rahall  
Ramstad  
Regula  
Rehberg  
Renzi  
Reyes  
Reynolds  
Rodriguez  
Rogers (AL)  
Rogers (KY)  
Rogers (MI)  
Rohrabacher  
Ros-Lehtinen  
Ross  
Rothman  
Roybal-Allard  
Royce  
Ruppersberger  
Rush  
Ryan (OH)  
Ryan (WI)  
Ryun (KS)  
Sabo  
Sanchez, Linda  
T.  
Sanchez, Loretta  
Sanders  
Saxton  
Schiff  
Schrock  
Scott (GA)  
Scott (VA)  
Sensenbrenner  
Serrano  
Sessions  
Shadegg  
Shaw  
Shays  
Sherman  
Sherwood  
Shuster  
Simmons  
Simpson  
Skeltan  
Slaughter  
Smith (MI)  
Smith (NJ)  
Smith (TX)

Smith (WA)  
Snyder  
Souder  
Spratt  
Stark  
Stearns  
Stenholm  
Stupak  
Sweeney  
Tancred  
Tanner  
Tauscher  
Tauzin  
Taylor (MS)  
Taylor (NC)  
Terry  
Thomas  
Thornberry  
Tiahrt  
Tiberi  
Toomey  
Turner (OH)  
Turner (TX)  
Udall (CO)  
Udall (NM)  
Upton  
Van Hollen  
Visclosky  
Vitter  
Walden (OR)  
Walsh  
Wamp  
Watson  
Watt  
Waxman  
Weiner  
Weldon (FL)  
Weldon (PA)  
Weller  
Wexler  
Whitfield  
Wicker  
Wilson (NM)  
Wilson (SC)  
Wolf  
Wu  
Wynn  
Young (AK)  
Young (FL)

## NOT VOTING—6

Bishop (UT)  
Gephardt

Moran (VA)  
Pastor

Sullivan  
Tierney

## ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD) (during the vote). Members are advised that 2 minutes remain in the vote.

## □ 2018

Mr. REYNOLDS changed his vote from "aye" to "no."

So the motion to adjourn was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

## PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2210, SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The pending business is the question of ordering the previous question on House Resolution 336.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to vacate the ordering of the yeas and nays on the question of ordering the previous question on House Resolution 336 in favor of the previous force vote thereon.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, so ordered.

The aye voice vote on that question earlier today stands, and the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 2210.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

## SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). Pursuant to House Resolution 336 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 2210.

The Chair designates the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) as Chairman of the Committee of the Whole, and requests the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD) to assume the Chair temporarily.

## □ 2025

## IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 2210) to reauthorize the Head Start Act to improve the school readiness of disadvantaged children, and for other purposes, with Mr. LAHOOD (Chairman pro tempore) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to speak out of order.)

## LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I know the Members of the House are concerned about the schedule that we have been on and the schedule we are going to be on. And in the interest of apprising Members of what they might expect for the balance of this evening and tomorrow, I yield to the distinguished majority leader, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY).

Mr. DELAY. I appreciate the distinguished whip yielding to me.

In consultation with the minority, we have come up with what we think is a very firm schedule, very fair schedule, and that is we, as most Members know, will go to the Head Start bill at the end of this conversation. There will be about 2 hours, 2 hours 20 minutes of debate before a vote. Then when that bill is disposed of, we will go to the drug reimportation bill, hopefully voting on that final passage sometime around 1 o'clock. Then we will break and come back tomorrow.

We have been in discussion with the ranking member of the appropriations and the chairman of the appropriations. They want to do a supplemental on FEMA and fires first thing in the morning, or in the morning, and then

go to VA-HUD appropriations. We will not be doing D.C. appropriations tomorrow. We anticipate or we hope that Members will get us amendments to the VA-HUD bill so that we can make some sort of arrangements in time on that debate. And if everything goes well, we ought to be able to adjourn sometime around 5 o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, if I might, Mr. Leader, it is my understanding that the first thing that will be considered tomorrow will be the Solis motion to instruct on the Child Tax Credit. We would have an hour of debate on that. Am I correct, sir?

Mr. DELAY. The gentleman is correct. We will start that at 9 a.m.

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. OBEY. I think Members need to understand if we are to facilitate the agreement that has been described and if we are going to get out of here at a reasonable time tomorrow, we do need to have all of the amendments that are going to be offered to the VA-HUD bill in tonight. So my understanding is on our side of the aisle, the leadership is sending out a bulletin to all Members that they need to have their amendments filed by 10:30 tonight because that is the only way we can work overnight to get an agreement on the universe of amendments and work out time agreements for all of them; otherwise, we will be here until midnight tomorrow.

□ 2030

Mr. HOYER. I yield to the majority leader.

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding.

I appreciate the ranking member of the Committee on Appropriations pointing that out because it will take all night tonight to work on those amendments, and during the time of the debate on the motion to instruct and the supplemental, we will have to firm up those agreements so that the debate on VA-HUD will go smoothly.

Mr. HOYER. Reclaiming my time, my question did not include it, so you did not say it, but just to clarify it for Members, on the motions to instruct on the child tax, the vote will be tomorrow, as well, after debate, or at least shortly after the debate. It may not be immediately, but it will be tomorrow; am I correct?

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will continue to yield, it will be tomorrow, but hopefully we can work it where we can roll it into other votes.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the leader and I thank the ranking member as well as the chairman of the Committee on Appropriations for helping us arrive at this schedule which will be defined, and Members can, I think, pretty well know when they are going to be voting on issues from here on in.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER).

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I rise tonight in support of H.R. 2210, the School Readiness Act, legislation that will improve the Federal Head Start program by increasing its focus on academics and helping to close the readiness gap. We believe that the bill that we have before us will close the readiness gap that exists between Head Start graduates and their more affluent peers.

I want to thank the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Education Reform and the author of this bill, for his dedication on behalf of disadvantaged children. We would not be here today without his hard work.

The measure before us reflects a consensus agreement amongst Members of this House who believe that disadvantaged children in our country are getting the best this Nation can possibly give them. In opposing our efforts to strengthen Head Start, my friends on the other side of the aisle have repeatedly said, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," but the evidence suggests this is a system that badly needs fixing.

Too many studies show Head Start children are entering kindergarten behind their peers. Improving school readiness standards for Head Start grantees in all States will help close this readiness gap.

Worse, in many parts of the country, Head Start centers are not getting the job done. Data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shows most Head Start grantees across the country are actually falling far short of Federal standards, the very standards that the congressional Democrats say would be undermined by the School Readiness Act.

In fiscal year 2002, a total of 559 Head Start grantees were reviewed. Only 9 percent were found to be in compliance, 9 percent, with our Head Start performance standards. The remaining 509 grantees, 91 percent, had one or more areas of noncompliance.

In fiscal year 2001, nearly 600 Head Start grantees were reviewed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Only 11 percent of those grantees were found to be in compliance with all Head Start performance standards; 89 percent were out of compliance.

These statistics are nothing short of shocking, and I would ask my friends on both sides of the aisle, do not our children deserve better? We think they do.

The measure before us meets the President's goal to strengthen the overall quality of Head Start, especially the academic standards, by emphasizing cognitive development and the results of scientifically based re-

search. It requires all new Head Start teachers to have at least an associate degree by 2005 and half of all Head Start teachers nationwide to have a bachelor's degree by 2008. It restores civil rights protections to faith-based organizations, removing barriers that discourage some of America's most talented and compassionate groups from providing services to children in need.

It gives up to eight States with an existing commitment to early childhood education the opportunity to coordinate Head Start with their own preschool programs; and we recognize that offering highly qualified States the opportunity to coordinate programs will result in better outcomes for parents and children than what Head Start serves today.

The bill guarantees that children in these demonstration States have access to pre-kindergarten programs that are at least as strong, if not stronger, than what is currently offered by Head Start. States are required to have strong standards for school readiness already in place to increase their already substantial funding of early childhood education and maintain or improve all comprehensive services, including health, nutrition and parental involvement.

The bill ensures that no State or local funds can be supplanted and that all Head Start funds must be spent on Head Start uses.

Additionally, the bill increases authorized funding for Head Start by more than \$202 million for the upcoming year, as originally proposed, while setting specific spending levels for the remaining spending years of the bill. It also includes a 5-year hold harmless that guarantees funding for all Head Start centers in the pilot States, instead of the 3 years that were originally proposed.

I am grateful to everyone who played a part in helping us to reach this agreement, and I do believe it has helped pave the way for this legislation that could dramatically improve school readiness for disadvantaged children.

In his remarks on Head Start earlier this month, President Bush said, Head Start is "working okay. We want better than 'okay' in America. We want excellence." The children in Head Start deserve the very best that this Nation can give them, nothing less.

Mr. Chairman, these reforms will not dismantle the Head Start program as some of my colleagues have claimed, and I am sure will claim as the evening goes on. They will strengthen the Head Start program. This debate is about protecting children, not about protecting turf. Instead of clinging jealously to the status quo, these lobbyists should join us in bringing real improvement to the Head Start system that needs to do better for our children.

I want to urge my colleagues to vote "yes" tonight on H.R. 2210.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 5½ minutes.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong opposition to the underlying bill. While we spent a great deal of time in No Child Left Behind to provide for improved student achievement, increased standards and accountability to ask more of State schools and students, this legislation does exactly the opposite. It decreases the standards and decreases the accountability, and it weakens our commitment to quality and it asks less of the States.

We should not be experimenting with this program. I appreciate that the gentleman says that 91 percent of these programs were out of compliance, but what he does not tell us is that in that same audit 85 percent of the programs were found to be of high quality. Why were they of high quality? Because of the Head Start standards, the Head Start performance standards and the quality standards. These are the performance and quality standards that Congress after Congress and President after President have worked to continuously improve so that Head Start now is the premier pre-K program for impoverished children in this Nation. There is no State that has a program comparable to Head Start for these children.

When my colleague on the other side suggests that these children do not do as well as their peers, he is denying all of the evidence. These children are doing better than their peers. They are not doing as well as middle-class white children in the suburbs, but he does not know of any program that will have these children do as well in the year or two as middle-class white children in the suburbs, but among their peers, among the children in same community who do not get to participate, these children do much better and they accelerate by the end of kindergarten.

Head Start works and it performs, and it performs well for these children. But this legislation takes another approach. While the first part of this legislation makes many improvements that we agree with and we support in this bill, the second provision provides for a block grant. It was a wholesale block grant of the entire program that politically was unsustainable. It became an eight-State block program, and over the last few days apparently some people got promises to vote for this bill and they would not block grant their State. There is a commitment to block grants.

But what do they do with these block grants? In the block grants they circumvent the standards of performance and quality and education standards and health services and comprehensive services because if they have a block grant, they do not have to meet those standards. It says so in the bill. They will say in their Dear Colleagues, it has to meet or exceed Head Start standards, but in the law, it says it must generally meet or exceed. "Generally"

is a very important word here because they do not have to comply with the standards.

The same is true in accountability, and yet we do this. We weaken these standards. We create this loophole of the block grant, and we do it without any evidence to suggest that that is the answer.

The concern is about accountability, the concern is about performance; and we put the children into a system for which there really is no accountability or performance. Nothing requires a showing that the system that will be created is better than the current Head Start system, that the program running currently in the State is better than the Head Start system; and yet, we are talking about creating a system where almost as much as 40 percent of the children could be put in that system.

That is really not fair to these children because Head Start is their best hope. Head Start is our premier early education program in this country, and that is why it must be protected. And "protected" is the right word because this legislation with the block grant is an all-out assault on Head Start as we know it, on Head Start as it performs and Head Start as it delivers for these children and these families and their educational opportunity.

Can it be improved? Of course it can be improved, and what every President and every Congress on a bipartisan basis, Republican and Democratic administrations, year after year, time after time, they have continuously improved this program. I have been on this committee for 29 years, and we have continuously approved this program every 3 to 5 years. That is why it is the premier program. That is why it gets the results it does.

Now what happens here? For the first time, we essentially see a partisan assault on that bipartisan coalition that has led to that continuous improvement of this program, that has led to these comprehensive services for these children.

□ 2045

And these services are terribly important. Terribly important. Health screening, vision, dental care. What will you get under their block grant? You will get a referral to a service. You may not get the service. You may get to stand in line. You may get put on a waiting list, but you do not necessarily get the service for mental health screening and general health screening and nutrition and health education, all of which we know in terms of child development of these impoverished children is terribly important.

But, finally, let me say this. There is something else going on in this bill that is the first in 35 years. When they capped the expenditures in the out-years, when they changed such sums as necessary, under which every President and every Congress has expanded the participation in the Head Start pro-

gram, there is not enough money for inflation. So in the third year, we find that some 5,000 to 10,000 children at a minimum are going to have to stop attending Head Start because of the capped authorization.

I appreciate all of the money we have put in Head Start under President Clinton's leadership, under this Congress, the Republican leadership, that we have done over the last 8 years; but that comes to a grinding halt in this legislation. That is why this bill should be rejected, and later we will hope that the substitute will be accepted by the Congress; and then we can continue the process of continuing to improve America's premier education program for pre-K impoverished children.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), the author of the bill and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Education Reform.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) for yielding me this time tonight and for all the tremendous work he has done in the committee and on this piece of legislation.

There has been a lot of rhetoric about this legislation, and we are going to hear a lot more in the next 2 hours. Frankly, I would love to be able to stand and try to repudiate all that we are hearing, but perhaps we do not have time for that. So I thought I would take a little different tack in the time I have and that is to make sure that people who are really willing to listen understand what truly is in this title II, which is the State demonstration program of this bill.

I think we can all agree on the reforms made in title I, or at least most of them anyhow. What has been the strongest point of contention is title II, which does create the eight-State demonstration program that would allow a select number of qualified States to better coordinate and to improve their early education programs.

What title II does not do is seek to dismantle Head Start as we know it. It does not create a block grant, nor does it permit States to use this money as a bandage for their ailing budgets. Since H.R. 2210 was introduced, we have listened to the concerns raised by Members on the other side of the aisle as well as Head Start advocates across the Nation. What we have before us today is a carefully crafted bill which clearly addresses all of these concerns.

I very strongly believe in the State demonstration project. Title II is critical, because today, unlike in 1965 when Head Start was created, Governors have a host of initiatives to serve disadvantaged citizens, including WIC, TANF, Community Services Block Grant, and state-run prekindergarten programs. Most of these programs are run through States, making coordination easy. In Head Start, however,

grantees receive funds directly from the Federal Government, despite the fact that it may be more beneficial to coordinate with similar State initiatives.

Those Governors who have demonstrated a commitment to early childhood education programs will now have an opportunity to fully coordinate all of those programs. By empowering those States that are committed to early childhood education to coordinate their existing patchwork of child care and preschool programs, we will produce improved results for all our children.

In order for a State to participate in the demonstration program, they would have to meet a set of eligibility requirements. The State would then submit a plan to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for approval by the Secretary. In order to be eligible, a State would need to show evidence that they are contributing to Head Start or State prekindergarten programs an amount in State and local dollars that is at least half of what the State receives in Head Start funding; existing State school readiness standards and demonstration of a willingness to allowing those State standards with K through 12 State standards, if they have not already done so; existing professional development criteria for early childhood educators; and an established means of interagency coordination.

Once a State has been approved by the Secretary, there are a number of requirements and prohibitions attached to the State. For example, a State would be prohibited from using Head Start funds to pad their State budgets. Explicit in the legislation is a prohibition on supplanting, misdirecting, or misappropriating Federal or State early childhood education funds to other purposes. States are also required to continue to fund early childhood education at the same level as the 2003 fiscal year.

Under this bill, it is illegal for States to reduce their commitments to early childhood education. In order to participate in the pilot, States must be matching at least 50 percent of the Federal commitment with State and local dollars and contribute from any non-Federal sources an additional 5 percent of their Federal Head Start allotment. This good-faith money ensures that States make a strong commitment to early childhood education.

Participating States must also have state-developed standards that generally meet or exceed the standards that ensure the quality and effectiveness of programs operated by Head Start agencies. Children in a Head Start program in a participating State will be receiving the same, if not better, services than if that State remained in the current structure. States must have standards that ensure children participating in a program demonstrate language skills, prereading knowledge, pre-mathematics knowl-

edge, cognitive abilities related to academic achievement and social development.

Finally, today, we require a State in a demonstration program to continue to fund all current Head Start grantees for the full 5 years of the project.

Mr. Chairman, I ask my colleagues to look at the details and the facts. This is good policy. Examining how State coordination will enhance the academic preparedness of pre-K children is something that will ultimately help all of the children in our districts.

The School Readiness Act of 2003 builds upon the reforms of previous reauthorizations of Head Start as well as the requirements of the landmark No Child Left Behind and the vision of President Bush and Secretary Thompson. We all want to do the best for our children. I truly believe this bill does this.

I have looked at the results that have existed in Head Start for a number of years, and they just are not what we need. We need to enhance the program and do even more. That is what this bill does. That is what it is all about. I would ask all of us to support the legislation when the time comes for it.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY), the ranking member of the subcommittee dealing with Head Start.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Chairman, I thank the ranking member for yielding me this time.

This Head Start bill is outrageous. It turns a program that is a proven success at improving the lives and futures of low-income children into a Federal experiment. And for the first time in this Nation's history, it repeals the law that protects employees against religious discrimination.

Head Start does a better job than any other program to narrow the school readiness gap between low-income children and their more advantaged peers. These are our Nation's most disadvantaged children, Mr. Chairman, children who face multiple barriers to learning. One year in Head Start can erase all of these barriers.

We have absolute proof that children who have been in Head Start enter kindergarten ahead of their peers from similar backgrounds but without Head Start. These children make substantial gains in specific academics during kindergarten. They end up close to all national academic norms by the end of the kindergarten year.

We know that children who complete Head Start are less likely to become delinquent and more likely to graduate from high school. Yet not only does this bill hand Head Start over to the States to do what they would do with it as a block grant, it would also lead to tens of thousands of Head Start children losing their beloved teachers for no other reason than religious prejudice. The base bill allows faith-based Head Start providers to fire thousands of dedicated Head Start teachers be-

cause of their religious beliefs or practices.

Today, Members will have the opportunity to vote for the Miller amendment, which will stop the dismantling of Head Start, and for my amendment against religious discrimination. Voting for these amendments will ensure that low-income children can continue to get the head start they need to succeed in school and to succeed in life. Without these amendments, this bill must be defeated.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), who is the chairman of the Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness of the Committee on Education and the Workforce and who does a wonderful job.

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of H.R. 2210, the School Readiness Act, which will strengthen the Head Start program by closing the readiness gap that exists between low- and upper-income children.

I want to thank my good friend, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), and the chairman of the Subcommittee on Education Reform, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE), for their hard work on getting this important piece of legislation here to the floor. At the outset, I want to thank them for their willingness to work with me to include language in the committee report on facilities management.

The Los Angeles County Office of Education, the largest Head Start grantee in the country, has been experiencing great difficulty in meeting the Department's requirement that it spend facility-related funding by the end of the Federal Government's fiscal year. In my State of California, with the numerous environmental and permitting reviews that are required at the local and State level, it is nearly impossible to get approval to spend money in this time frame, much less 2 years. Even more daunting is the fact that fiscal years for many grantees do not coincide with the Federal Government. I am grateful that we are urging the Department to take a look at giving grantees some flexibility to meet a longer time period.

Mr. Chairman, like many of my colleagues, I have been listening to the debate, and I have heard criticisms of this bill. Over the last few weeks, those on the other side of the aisle and their supporters have vilified the School Readiness Act all in the name of protecting the status quo and resisting the efforts to ensure that disadvantaged children in this country are better prepared for school. I think it is important that we put down our political talking points and get to the bottom of what this bill truly will do.

Now, there is no question that there is near-unanimous support for the Head Start program. Created in 1965, and located in every community in the country, the program has been a valuable part of our Nation in preparing lower-

income children for elementary school. At the same time, it is Congress' responsibility to examine every program up for reauthorization to see if it is truly meeting our high standards for success and if there are any potential reforms that we can perform.

I would argue that regardless of the political reluctance to enact and accept fundamental reforms, every Federal program could do a better job of carrying out its mission than it is currently performing. This applies to those programs on the elementary and secondary school level, it applies to programs governing postsecondary education, it applies to workforce development programs, and, yes, it applies to early childhood programs like Head Start.

And so we come here to consider H.R. 2210, which will improve the Head Start program and close the readiness gap that exists between Head Start children and their more affluent peers. We strongly believe that we must strengthen Head Start's academic standards by emphasizing cognitive development and the results of scientifically based research on topics critical to children's school readiness. I believe that Head Start has placed an unbalanced emphasis on providing health and social services to children and their families, which have resulted in Head Start children not making the gains necessary to begin school with an equal opportunity to succeed.

A critical component of school readiness is the attainment of prereading abilities. Head Start programs should provide children from low-income families with a high-quality oral language and literature-rich environment. Through scientific research, much has been learned about the way children learn to read and the strong foundation that is important before children are given formal reading instruction in kindergarten and first grade.

Consistent with the early reading initiative, launched as part of the No Child Left Behind Act, Head Start must play a pivotal role in this effort. We have done this and can do this while preserving all current health and nutrition services for Head Start children.

Mr. Chairman, I know there has been a lot of criticism about this bill because of the State option, but I think it is important to point out this committee has produced a bill which improves the education of our Nation's most vulnerable children, and for this reason I urge all my colleagues to support this bill.

□ 2100

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 15 seconds just to say to my colleague, we do not know whether this bill will improve the education of the children, but we do know that the language contained in this bill will weaken the education standards, will weaken the comprehensive services available to these chil-

dren and will weaken the accountability of this program.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), subcommittee ranking member.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time, and I rise in opposition to this bill.

This bill literally turns back the clock on decades of efforts to improve programs for our youngest children. Head Start has meant so much to so many of our most disadvantaged children and their families. Rather than strengthen Head Start through bipartisan consensus, this bill begins the dismantling of the most successful and popular early childhood education program in our Nation's history.

I must also express my disappointment that the majority has not sought to reach bipartisan consensus on this legislation. I have been through, Mr. Chairman, a number of Head Start reauthorizations during my 27 years here in the Congress, and they were all pleasant and productive experiences. This statute has always been reauthorized in a bipartisan manner. I strongly believe that we do our best work when we pass bipartisan legislation, especially legislation dealing with children. Not to do so is a doleful disappointment.

The Republican Head Start bill creates an unaccountable block grant that undermines the comprehensive nature of Head Start. Under this legislation, the strength of Head Start's decades of existence would be eviscerated through lower-quality State-controlled block grants.

What makes the bill's block grants even more troubling is that it departs from the efforts of this committee over the past decade to strengthen accountability and results in Federal programs, the most recent example being the No Child Left Behind. On that bill, Democrats and Republicans in both the House and the Senate, along with the President, all worked to create bipartisan legislation to strengthen accountability in our K-12 programs.

Now we are confronted by a White House and Republican bill to create unaccountable block grants in the Head Start program. This does not make sense. I urge opposition to this legislation.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON) having assumed the chair, Mr. DUNCAN, Chairman of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2210) to reauthorize the Head Start Act to improve the school readiness of disadvantaged children, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

REPORT ON H.R. 2861, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

Mr. WALSH, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-235) on the bill (H.R. 2861) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1, rule XXI, all points of order are reserved on the bill.

#### SCHOOL READINESS ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 336 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2210.

□ 2103

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2210) to reauthorize the Head Start Act to improve the school readiness of disadvantaged children, and for other purposes, with Mr. DUNCAN in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, time remaining under general debate, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER) has 15½ minutes and the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) has 20¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) who not only is extremely well known for his expertise in coaching, but is one of the leading experts on mentoring in this country.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection, the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) controls the time.

There was no objection.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Chairman, I certainly agree with all those who have spoken tonight that Head Start is an excellent program. It is a necessary program. Yet many people feel that no changes are needed to the program.

I guess if you put it in any context, let us say you ran a business for 35 years, a football team for 35 years, a school for 35 years, and you said over and over again, if it ain't broke, don't fix it and you stayed with a pat hand, my feeling is you would drift toward mediocrity. There is no organization that can stay the same year after year after year. I think there are a couple of things that really can be fixed. I think